

More clout likely for State, Defense

By Mary Belcher
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President Reagan yesterday accepted the resignation of National Security Adviser Robert C. "Bud" McFarlane, as expected, ending days of speculation over the batting order in the administration's foreign policy team.

Vice Adm. John M. Poindexter, the chief McFarlane assistant during the past two years, was named by the president as the new White House foreign policy adviser.

Mr. Poindexter, a 27-year Navy veteran, is expected to take a lower public profile than did his predecessor, who was unhappy with the access to the president afforded him by White House Chief of Staff Donald Regan.

The Poindexter appointment is expected to give a larger foreign policy role to the chief of staff, Secretary of State George Shultz and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, according to administration sources.

The choice of a more forceful adviser — such as former U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, former Republican Sen. John Tower or Navy Secretary John Lehman — would have created the potential for clashes

with Mr. Regan, who took over as chief of staff last February, the sources said.

With Mr. McFarlane and Mr. Poindexter at his side, the president said he was accepting the resignation with "deep regret."

"Few have served with more dedication, none with more loyalty," Mr. Reagan said. "Bud has offered me wise counsel and has been a trusted adviser and confidant in carrying out our administration's foreign policy goals and objectives."

Mr. McFarlane, a 48-year-old ex-Marine and Vietnam veteran, stood at the president's side, wearing a typically stoic expression. His voice broke slightly, however, when he thanked Mr. Reagan for the opportunity to serve as national security adviser since October 1983.

Both the president and Mr. McFarlane said there was no truth to reports that Donald Regan, the chief of staff, set Mr. McFarlane's departure in motion.

"You have all been misinformed about that," Mr. Reagan said. "After 30 years in which this country has been his first priority, he feels a responsibility . . . toward his family."

Answering charges that Mr. Regan blocked Mr. McFarlane's direct access to the Oval Office, the president said, "The national security adviser reports directly to me and does not go through the chief of staff."

Mr. McFarlane, who routinely worked 14- to 16-hour days at the White House, said only that reports of his problems with Mr. Regan were "nonsense."

But close McFarlane associates said problems with the chief of staff, as well as with Mr. Shultz and CIA Director William Casey, prompted Mr. McFarlane's resignation.

Mr. Poindexter, who graduated first in the U.S. Naval Academy's Class of '58, made light of suggestions that he might not get along with the chief of staff by noting that Mr. Regan is an ex-Marine.

"The Navy and the Marine Corps always get along well," Mr. Poindexter said. "Don Regan told me that yesterday, that I had direct access, so there won't be a problem."

The president said stories about aides resigning under pressure have "disturbed me probably more than anything that has happened since I've been in office."

"I said in the very beginning . . . that I would take people if they could only stay a year, two years, whatever it might be, because the kind of people I wanted were the kind of people who didn't necessarily want government jobs," Mr. Reagan said.

Mr. Poindexter will be the president's fourth national security adviser in five years. Richard Allen and William Clark preceded Mr. McFarlane in the job.

Mr. McFarlane served in the Reagan administration since 1981, as counselor to the secretary of state and deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs. He be-

came national security adviser two years ago.

First Lady Nancy Reagan, who takes a keen interest in her husband's staff, told reporters yesterday when asked about Mr. McFarlane, "I'll miss him. I wish him well."

Although there has been speculation that Mr. McFarlane would like an ambassadorship, he indicated yesterday he has no immediate job plans.

The president said he would be calling on Mr. McFarlane for advice in the future.

"The man has told me that he needs to leave government service now for certain responsibilities that he feels to his family," Mr. Reagan said.

Mr. Poindexter, 49, joined the National Security Council staff in 1981 and became deputy assistant to the president for national security affairs in October 1983. He holds a doctorate in nuclear physics.

During his naval career, Mr. Poindexter commanded the guided missile cruiser USS England and the Destroyer Squadron 31. Before joining the NSC staff, he served on the personal staff of Navy secretaries John Chaffee, John Warner and J. William Middendorf II from 1971 to 1974. He was executive assistant to the chief of naval operations, Adm. James L. Holloway III, from 1976 to 1978.